

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated December 29, 2004. Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 26-33 and 44-58 remained pending in the application. By this amendment, applicants have cancelled claims 27 and 52 without prejudice and have added new claims 59-80.

Initially considering formal matters, in reviewing the application, applicants have discovered minor typographical errors in the specification. The above indicated amendments to the specification have been made to correct these typographical errors.

Turning now to substantive matters, claims 44-47, 49-51 and 54-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gonzales (U.S. Patent No. 6,648,460), and claims 26 and 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Childers et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,170,937). Claims 27, 28, 33, 48, 52, 53 and 58 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 26, 29-32, 44-47, 49-51 and 54-57. However, as described in detail below, applicants have amended the claims in accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in order to advance prosecution of the present application. Such amendments are made without prejudice to further prosecution in this application or any related application.

Independent claim 26 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 27, which previously depended from claim 26. In the December 29, 2004 Office action, claim 27 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

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Amended claim 26 thus is allowable. Because claims 28-33 depend from claim 26, those claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as amended claim 26.

Independent claim 44 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 52, which previously depended from claim 44. In the December 29, 2004 Office action, claim 52 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Amended claim 44 thus is allowable. Because claims 45-51 and 53-58 depend from claim 44, those claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as amended claim 44.

New claim 59 corresponds to original claim 28 rewritten in independent form. Claim 28 previously was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, new claim 59 is allowable. Claims 60-64 depend from new claim 59 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 59.

New claim 65 corresponds to original claim 33 rewritten in independent form. Claim 33 previously was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, new claim 65 is allowable.

New claim 66 corresponds to original claim 48 rewritten in independent form. Claim 48 previously was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, new claim 66 is allowable. Claims 67-79 depend from new claim 66 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 66.

New claim 80 corresponds to original claim 58, rewritten in independent form. Claim 58 previously was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, new claim 80 is allowable.

In Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, the Examiner paraphrased various of applicants' claims in indicating reasons for allowability.

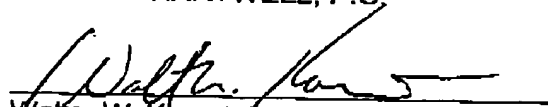
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Applicants agree with the Examiner's conclusions regarding the patentability of the claims indicated allowable, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing in the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicants believes that the claims are allowable because the prior art fails to teach or suggest the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

For at least the reasons stated above, the rejection of claims 26, 29-32, 44-47, 49-51 and 54-57 under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and the objection to claims 28, 33, 48, 53 and 58, should be withdrawn. Each of these claims, as well as new claims 59-80, is believed to be allowable. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, and allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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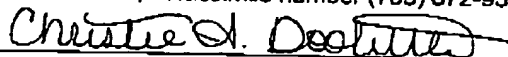
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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner A. Vo, Group Art Unit 2861, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (703) 872-9306 on March 29, 2005.



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